

Writing a story on smoking, tobacco, or nicotine? *We have news for you!*

The Tobacco Prevention Program of Public Health - Seattle King County leads King County efforts to combat the many negative impacts of tobacco. The program has a staff of 11 who work to prevent addiction, reduce exposure to second hand smoke, and provide help for people who want to quit smoking. If you need information for a story you are writing or for a column give us a call. We can provide you with excellent community contacts and resources, science based information and data about the effects of tobacco. Also we're the first place to turn if you need input on a lifestyle, policy, business and feature stories. Contact our Public Information Officers to get in touch with the right person within our program.



The Tobacco Prevention Program

Tobacco Prevention Program staff has a wide range of experience in public health, businesses, education and community development. Our health educators are seen as leaders in training service providers and our youth access program is leading the country in a national discussion on the next phase of attacking the problem of youth smoking. The Tobacco Prevention Program is mostly funded from a grant from the State of Washington's Department of Health. The majority of these dollars are from the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies. The program is housed in the Prevention Division of Public Health - Seattle King County. The work of tobacco prevention focuses on community grant support to local agencies and contractors, training and developing population based policy initiatives to support prevention efforts and eliminating exposure to second hand smoke.

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www.tobaccoprevention.org

www.smokefreeseattle.org

www.artpatch.org

www.accessseattle2006.org

Prevention

Education

The program provides education to the community about the health effects of smoking and other tobacco products as well as information about tobacco marketing efforts. Recently a significant part of the programs effort has been to highlight the many ways in which tobacco companies are using unconventional tactics or guerilla marketing (see www.artpatch.org).

Access to Tobacco

Most long time smokers begin smoking before the age of 18. It is illegal in Washington State for anyone under the age of 18 to possess or use any tobacco product. It is also illegal to sell tobacco products to a minor. The program works to reduce both the supply and demand of tobacco products to minors by educating retailers and youth about the law and the health effects of the product. The program is hosting a national conference in April of 2006 on these issues (see www.accessseattle2006.org).

Reducing Exposure to Second Hand Smoke

There is no safe level of exposure to second hand smoke. Surveys of local people have been clear: they believe second hand smoke is dangerous, they support a ban on smoking in public places, and they prefer not to have to work or be entertained in clouds of second hand smoke. The program works to help businesses make the switch to smoke free and will help business with the transition if a law is passed. We believe health, business and an active nightlife belong together.

Helping People Quit

The center piece of the program's activities to help people quit is our Brief Tobacco Intervention Skills training and the Community Tobacco Cessation Partnership. The focus of these efforts is to educate health care providers about the importance of discussing smoking with their clients and offering resources to people who want to quit. Almost all smokers want to kick the habit and we are working to train providers to offer the help people need. The quitline is also a key resource: 1-877-270-STOP (7867)

Quick Tobacco Facts

King County

- 15.7% of adults in King County smoke cigarettes
- 5.5% of pregnant women in King County do not smoke during pregnancy and 1,610 infants are born each year to mothers who do smoke during pregnancy.
- Over 70% of King County hospitality workers would rather work in a smoke free environment.
- Nearly 75% of smokers profess that they would like/or plan to quit.
- Over 75% of King County voters prefer smoke free dining and drinking.

Washington State

- Current adult smokers statewide - 19.8%.
- Recent surveys report that 19.7% of 12th graders report smoking cigarettes.
- 10.9% of pregnant women report smoking during pregnancy.
- 8,000 annual deaths related to smoking, and annually there are approximately 1,000 deaths of non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or in the workplace.
- Over \$1.5 billion State tax dollars are spent on health care costs resulting from tobacco use each year.
- Tobacco industry spends over \$160 million dollars every year (\$449,000/day) marketing their products in Washington State.
- There are over 80,000 fewer adult smokers in the state since the Tobacco Industry Settlement and treatment and prevention programs have been started.

United States

- 45.8 million adults in the United States smoke cigarettes.
- 50 million adults alive today have quit smoking.
- 442,398 U.S. deaths are attributable each year to cigarette smoking and tobacco use.
- Since 1964, an estimated 12 million people have died prematurely due to tobacco use, including:
 - 4.1 million deaths from cancer
 - 5.5 million deaths from cardiovascular disease
 - 2.1 million deaths from respiratory disease (such as emphysema)
 - Over 94,000 infant deaths related to mothers that smoked during pregnancy. 6.4 million people currently under the age of 18 will die prematurely of a tobacco related disease.
- Paralleling the enormous health toll of tobacco use is the economic burden; according to the CDC, more than \$75 billion per year in medical expenditures and another \$80 billion per year resulting from lost productivity can be attributed to tobacco use.